



CIVIC FORCE

NEWS LETTER Vol.11

(Mar, 2017)



After suffering a great deal of damage from the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster, people of Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, have started a new project to rediscover the attractiveness of the region and to hand it down to the next generation. The photo shows “Sunadori-sensei (Fishermen Teachers),” a session offered by the community school, on how to catch seafood. (See P.3 for more details.)

Six Years After Great East Japan Earthquake, One Year After Kumamoto Earthquake

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More than six years have passed since the outbreak of the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, and our reconstruction support activities for the disaster-affected areas are now in its 7th year.

In the coastal areas where the tsunami hit, residential land development and construction of public housings for disaster victims are processing steadily. However, some 123,000 people are still living away from their hometowns.

This year, in spring, evacuation orders put to areas in Fukushima Prefecture will be lifted except for the difficult-to-return zone. However, it is likely that many evacuees will choose not to return.

In Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, the Kesennuma-Yokocho and Murasaki-Ichiba of the temporary shopping arcade will be closed this spring, finishing their roles. This was the city where Civic Force had placed its base from just after the outbreak of the disaster until January 2017.

The newsletter of this month shares the “updates” of our support activities of the Great East Japan Earthquake, including the voices of the people who work on the reconstruction of the Kesennuma region. We will also report on a new project of the Dream Support Project and on the future plans of “Fund JAPAN,” the General Incorporated Foundation (formerly called the Tohoku Common Benefit Investment Fund), which was established five years ago.

In addition, as part of the NPO Partner Projects, two new projects have started in Kumamoto Prefecture just before one year from the disaster. We hope you take a continued interest in the reconstruction activities conducted by those of the affected area along with our support activities.



The following articles describe the emergency response and aid activities that Civic Force has executed in various regions of Japan which were affected by disasters including the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Kumamoto Earthquake.

Great East Japan Earthquake

Books for Scholarship Students of Dream Support Project

Civic Force implemented a book support program from February to March 2017 for the scholarship students of the Dream Support Project.

We obtained 15 titles, including currently hot

books such as “Before the Coffee Gets Cold,” “The Courage of Being Disliked,” and “Who” (“Nanimono “); and business books such as “Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion,” “Communication Skills Count for a Lot” (“Tsutaekata ga 9 wari”), and “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” Those who are interested can apply for one of these books. Applicants will be given a book on condition that each submits a book report.

What is “Dream Support Project” ?

The “Dream Support Project” provides monthly scholarships of 30,000 yen to high school students of the affected areas who are facing difficulties in continuing education due to the earthquake worsening the economic conditions. These students are eligible for receiving monthly payments up to seven years until they start working (until the end of March 2019). It also implements educational programs to support young people who hope to contribute to the

reconstruction of the Tohoku region.

Civic Force continues to accept donations for the scholarship students. Contributions for the “Dream Support Fund” can be made at stores of the Lawson Group across the nation. From March 7, reconstruction support products such as lunch boxes and sweets prepared by using food from the Tohoku area will be sold.

Thank you very much for your kind and continuous support.

[Donation to the “Dream Support Project” (designated donation for Tohoku)]

- Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
Aoyama Branch Account No.6973031
Public Interest Incorporated Association Civic Force
- Japan Postal Bank:
Account No. 00100-1-662850
Public Interest Incorporated Association Civic Force

*The donation to the “Dream Support Project” will be used only for educational programs, but not for scholarships.



VOICE

Even before the 2011 earthquake, the decline in agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries caused by depopulation and aging had already been a serious issue in the affected areas. Civic Force had implemented the “NPO Partner Projects” and the “Mid-to Long-term Reconstruction Support Project” to focus on sustainable redevelopment in the local areas. The following reports show how much progress we see in our activities. Messages are from those who took actions at the local grassroots level and are still enthusiastically involved today.



Kesennuma City, Thriving as Tourist Destination

Mr. Naruhito Mori
Kesennuma City
Platform for Creation of Ria Coast Tourism

After the earthquake, Kesennuma City decided to position tourism as its main industry along with fishery. This led to the launching of the “Kesennuma Tourism Strategy Meeting” in a bid to promote tourism. “Platform for Creation of Ria Coast Tourism” was established in June 2013 with the support of Civic Force and our mission is to create a framework that would enable us to ensure smooth execution of all projects planned at the said meeting. With the help of third parties, including local promoters and media workers of other areas, we engage in rediscovering the attractive features of Kesennuma City to make the local people realize and appreciate that they live in a tourist destination.

We will soon celebrate our 4th anniversary and we have great confidence in what we do. “Choinozoki” workshop provides a chance to experience a glimpse of working and playing in this port city. Originally held as a non-scheduled event in 2015, it became a monthly event in 2016 and will finally become a weekly event from April this year. In addition, more than 20 “Ba! Ba! Ba!” events, which encourage people to reaffirm the attractiveness of Kesennuma City, have been held over the three years. This has become a popular event because the local people work together to introduce their city through planning tours and workshops.

We also engage in the development of cuisine using local seafood and we received the Japan Tourism Agency Commissioner Award in 2015. Many local governments and groups visit us to learn what we do and last year Prime Minister Shinzo Abe toured to Kesennuma City to see our initiatives. Shrinking economy caused by depopulation has been a serious issue in our community so we work together and take actions to sincerely tackle the issue. Please don't miss this opportunity to visit and “actually feel” Kesennuma City thriving as a tourist destination.

Encouraging Youths to Return or Relocate to Kesennuma

Mr. Takuma Kato
Chairperson of maru-office

Our organization was launched in the spring of 2015 with the cooperation of local youths and young people relocating and settling in to Kesennuma City after the disaster. Under the concept “Make yourself a part of the community,” we aim to be a fixer who encourages youths to return or relocate to Kesennuma City and supports human resources development.

“Sunadori-sensei (Fishermen Teachers)” is a session offered by the local community school where junior/senior high school students meet local fishermen to learn about their work. This project was started to change the situation of local youths leaving Kesennuma City after graduating from high school. We have received encouraging feedback as some participants have expressed their intentions to become fishermen in the future. We believe that the experiences of the “Machi-aruki (Discovering the city by walking)” project implemented from 2012 to 2013 by Karakuwa-maru, an organization supported by Civic Force, contributed to operating these later events smoothly.

We are also involved in providing city information, including vacant dwellings and new jobs, at the information counter which was partially opened in October 2016 to support relocation and settlement to Kesennuma City. Although practical actions to encourage people to relocate and settle in to the city are still on the agenda, I hope our organization can contribute not merely to increasing the population, but to the unique and sustainable development of our city.

Kesennuma City can be called an “open-minded rural area.” The spirit of fishermen penetrates in the area and we have welcomed various disaster relief support from external parties. Through my experience as a settler from another location, I have no doubt that human resource shortages can be transformed into opportunities for each of us to become the “one and only.” We will take actions to make Kesennuma City a role model of a city surviving from serious depopulation which is an issue many communities face nationwide.



Aiming at “the Second Round of Fund Circulation” in Common Benefit



Tohoku Common Benefit Investment Fund (Currently called “Fund JAPAN”) was established in December, 2011 with the donation from Civic Force to support local businesses that had been affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Through the investment in 14 projects, in total 164 million yen, we have continued to support the management and the increase of business opportunities for major local companies that would contribute to an expansion of employment and yield economic effects. The supports enabled many companies to continue their business, which leads to the growth of sales, and maintains and increases their employment.

As more than five years have passed since its establishment, the fund will aim at another goal — “the second round of fund circulation.” After confirming that the financial balance of a supported company has been improved and the company can afford to run their business without our support, it will be asked to accept withdrawal of our investment as much as possible, hopefully the full amount of investment, so that the fund can be used for another support to companies, which allows these companies to continue to operate with underpinning the region. A partial withdrawal of an investment is now under consideration to be put into practice at the end of September.

Closing Tohoku office — Preparing for Future Large-scale Disaster

Civic Force closed its Tohoku office at the end of January, 2017.

Civic Force transferred to the disaster hit areas its relief supplies from the storage in Fukuroi City, Shizuoka Prefecture, which is one of our partner public organization, soon after the Great East Japan Earthquake, started to call on companies for help at the same time, and moved into the affected area by helicopter on March 12, the day after the disaster. Then, we have procured and delivered large amount of relief goods, launched a car ferry service for isolated islands, set up a handmade bath service, dispatched employee volunteers, and implemented activities such as “NPO Partner Projects.” Since the summer of 2012, through the “Mid- to Long-term Reconstruction Support Project,” we have supported medium, long term reconstruction projects in the affected areas.

Meanwhile, Tohoku offices of Civic Force were based in Senmaya Town, Ichinoseki City in Iwate Prefecture, and Tanakamae, Kesenuma City, in Miyagi Prefecture, and then moved to Akaiwamakisawa, Kesenuma City in January, 2014. We have faced so many different challenges we had never

experienced in the process of the support activities for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake as the Civic Force was just founded in 2009.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of the people involved in our activities. Through “Dream Support Project” included in the Great East Japan Earthquake Mid- to Long-term Reconstruction Support Project, we will continue implementing the scholarship and the education program for the students affected in Tohoku.

Six countries have become a member of “Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (A-PAD),” which conveys experiences and lessons of the Great East Japan Earthquake to Asian Pacific regions where they suffer many natural disasters. We will encourage other countries and regions to join A-PAD, and the rescue team has been working on the training in preparation for the future large-scale disaster.

We would appreciate your continued cooperation so that we will be able to provide prompt and large-scale support by bringing together “civic forces” , after which our organization was named, when a large scale disaster occurs.



“NPO Partner Projects” in Kumamoto New Projects Start

Civic Force has been conducting “NPO Partner Projects” since June 2016 to support the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the areas affected by the Kumamoto Earthquake. Following the first phase where the projects had been carried out in cooperation with three other organizations, we entered in the second phase last December to launch the projects with local support groups for women, children and disabled people. Another two projects started in March.

LGBT-JAPAN

Sexual Minorities in Disaster Areas Also Need Care

Sexual minorities or LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) including those with gender identity disorder reportedly account for 7.6 % of the Japanese population. As LGBT not being generally recognized in Japan, their worries and concerns have also been overlooked in the quake-hit areas in Kumamoto.

In order to change the situation, Civic Force will launch a project to survey their current conditions and provide them with mental care in the areas affected by the Kumamoto Earthquake in cooperation with “LGBT-JAPAN,” an organization that have implemented a wide range of LGBT-related activities such as seminars and events, as well as investigations outsourced by companies.

LGBT-JAPAN visited Mashiki Town in July 2016 to inspect the facilities such as toilets and shower booths set around the unit housings for evacuees. They confirmed the lack of consideration for LGBT and suggested solutions for improvement. At the same time, LGBT-JAPAN has recognized the necessity to make an LGBT friendly environment where they

do not hesitate to talk about their worries and concerns, which helps clarify what problems they may face at the time of disaster.

Civic Force will continue to work and cooperate with LGBT-JAPAN in this partner project, and make use of the experiences to develop our disaster response activities.



LGBT friendly shelters and temporary houses have been scarce. Through the Partner Projects, we aim to have a mindset to identify problems and operate shelters for LGBT.

Reborn Network

Next Step to Help Rebuild the Communities in Nishihara Village

In Nishihara Village, where over 1,000 houses were fully or partially collapsed, people have been discussing the community-based collective relocation and the rebuilding of the area. However, it is not easy to proceed with



Various organizations engage in supportive activities in Nishihara Village through farming, community development, and offering study tour of good practices of collective relocation. Reborn Network will take the position to function as a hub of the supportive activities to continue the assistance to the local people for the future.



each resident’s thoughts, because the project the reconstruction project while to respect contains various difficult tasks such as maintaining the depopulating community, rebuilding the collapsed houses and building the good relation between those who leave and who stay in the village.

Civic Force will provide the local residents with information on good practices of collective relocation and dispatch experts through the partner project with “Reborn Network,” an organization working for the revitalization of Nishihara Village. The Reborn Network is composed of ten organizations based both inside and outside the village which have been working on the reconstruction. The participant groups include “Social Welfare Council of Nishihara Village,” “The NGO Collaboration Center for HANSHIN QUAKE Rehabilitation,” “WAKABA Meeting” – which supports voluntary efforts in creating a community by local people, and “Hyakusho Oendan” – which promotes reconstruction in agriculture. Civic Force will set up a platform for sharing information between the organizations, as well as carefully respond to the people’s changing needs through the proper management of volunteers’ activities for the communities.

Projects to Make Network between Communities

Roughly one year has passed since the Kumamoto Earthquake occurred. In the second phase, “NPO Partner Projects” has supported the reconstruction of the disaster affected areas. We have encouraged the advanced approaches which were born in Kumamoto Prefecture in community development and local networking. These approaches have been carried out by the support groups established in the wake of the earthquake.

Kumamoto Children / Women Support Net (KCW)

Symposium Held to Look Back on Earthquake and Childcare

On February 26, “Kumamoto Children/Women Support Net (KCW),” which was organized in the wake of the Kumamoto Earthquake, held a conference in Kumamoto City to look back on their experiences and activities from the viewpoint of childcare.

In the first part of the symposium, the staff of the kindergarten, which voluntarily accepted the disaster victims when the earthquake happened, took the rostrum to talk about the kindergarten’s roles and problems at the time of disaster. In the second part, the symposium focused on the role of the “Project of Dispatching Social Childcare

Workers,” a project where childcare workers in the disaster-hit areas can receive supports by experienced childcare workers who are based in other areas. The dispatched childcare workers and the kindergarten, which they assisted, shared their experiences with each other. They discussed how the shelters should be to make children smile, and the future childcare.

Civic Force has supported the KCW’s activities of mental care for the affected women and children, networking among the supportive organizations and the “Project of Dispatching Social Childcare Workers” .



The principal and staff of the kindergarten took the rostrum to share their experiences and problems.

Arts and Sports for everyone (ASE)

Communication with Silver Medalists through “Boccia”

“Boccia” is a universal sport game and a category of the official competitions in the Paralympic game, through which “Arts and Sports for Everyone (ASE)” has taken supportive activities to prevent the evacuees at the shelters from being socially isolated and offer social assistance to intellectual disabled individuals. Boccia Exchange Class at Izumi Minami Elementary School (Kumamoto City) – organized by NHK Public Welfare Organization on January 20, was also an event that ASE supported, where they rent the tools of boccia and prepared for the class. About 400 of the 4th to 6th graders participated in the class and experienced

boccia’s attractiveness and difficulty.

ASE also has been preparing for an event to promote the communication between the students of special support school and the people living in the temporary housing, as well as a forum for disabled people and the restoration of the disaster hit areas, which aim to solve the issue revealed in the aftermath of the earthquake that there was a lack of understanding for handicapped people.

Civic Force will continue to support ASE, which has made great efforts to remove the border between people with disabilities and ones without through boccia.



Two boccia players – Hidetaka Sugimura, the Rio Paralympics’ silver medalist, and Takayuki Hirose, enjoyed communication with the elementary school students in Kumamoto.



Creating an Emergency Preparedness

We are taking various measures to strengthen our emergency preparedness mechanism. This page introduces the support given by our partners, such as magazines that published articles about activities conducted by Civic Force.

Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

Mr. Onishi speaks at Fundraising Japan

“Fundraising Japan 2017” hosted by Japan Fundraising Association was held on March 18 and 19 in Tokyo. Mr. Kensuke Onishi, Chairperson of Civic Force, spoke about how to create a disaster support system and about its social impact, referring to his experiences and ideas, at the Second Day Opening Session, titled “Collective Impact-Collective Fundraising” and “Platform-Type Revolution.”



Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

Fwines holds Charity Wine Tasting Event

FWINES Co., Ltd held the Charity Wine Tasting Event on March 4 this year as the event has been organized by the company every year since 2011. All of the entrance fee, the wine tasting fee and the seminar fee were donated to the Civic Force Support Projects for the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. support system and about its social impact, referring to his experiences and ideas, at the Second Day Opening Session, titled “Collective Impact-Collective Fundraising” and “Platform-Type Revolution.”

Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

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■ PSC Click Fund
• For Tohoku
<http://www.psc-inc.co.jp/clickdonation/index.html>

Media

Civic Force Activities Posted on “D to D Concierge”

The activities of Civic Force were introduced on “Social Contribution Journal,” regular column of a medical website titled “DtoD Concierge.”

OZvision covers Civic Force

An interview with the head of the secretariat of Civic Force was posted on the blog of “Hapitas,” a point service website operated by OZvision Inc.
<http://www.civic-force.org/media/>

Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

Start Your Support with Only 33 Yen per Day

In order to be prepared for future disasters, we need your support. Become a monthly supporter and you can donate a fixed amount each month (in 1,000 yen units) and help prepare for future large-scale disasters. Payments can be made through bank transfers to Civic Force:

•Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation:
Aoyama Branch Account No. 6953964

•Japan Postal Bank:
Account No. 00140-6-361805
Account holder’s name of the above banks is “Civic Force”

•Credit card:
Please check the “Donate Now!” section of the Civic Force website below
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